

# THE BIRCH BARK

P.O. Box 148, Waterford, Maine 04088

Winter: (207) 741-2930

Summer: (207) 583-4478

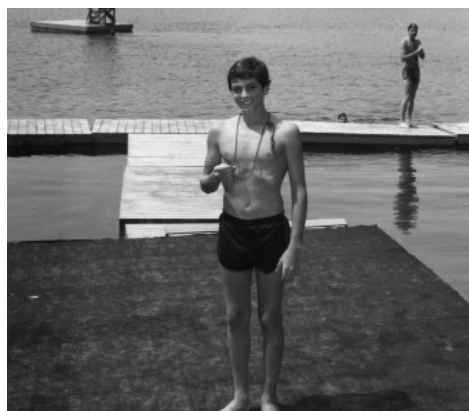
birchrock@aol.com

www.birchrock.org

Rich Deering '73, Alumni Director • Michael Mattson '83, Camp Director

## THE ALUMNI NEWS LETTER OF BIRCH ROCK CAMP

### MICHAEL HERZIG: MR. BRC



*Waterfront God-1983*

He is Birch Rock's original MR. BRC. He ran like a road-runner after being frightened by the neighboring bull. He led the camp soccer team in beating neighboring Camp Waganaki for the first time in history. He was the 25th person to complete his Whale. Chief Oguendo was his nickname. He loved the Maine woods and the early morning calls of the loons. This entrepreneurial camper was in charge of the camp's daily fruit punch snack. He could throw a mean curb ball on top of the field. He survived Rich Deering's arduous Basic Rescue and Water Safety Course and went on to become one of the camp's best waterfront gods. He was a camper for seven summers. He went on to be a staff member, supporter, fellow trustee and today he is proudly a Birch Rock dad. He is Michael Herzig – one of Birch Rock's faithful tried and true.

Born in 1967 as the second son of Donald & Gwen Herzig, Michael grew up in New York City with older brother Peter, also a Birch Rocker, counselor and past President of our Board of Trustees. Michael spent twelve years at the Collegiate School in the midst of the metropolis

before following Peter to Dartmouth College, where Michael graduated in 1989. Soon after returning to New York, Mike met wife Jojo and they were married in 1995. Shortly after their wedding, Michael and Jojo moved to London when Michael was offered the opportunity to transfer to a management role with Merrill Lynch. They left as a family of two and arrived back in the US three years later as a family of four, having welcomed Gabrielle and David '00S to the world during their stay in the UK. And youngest son Robby joined the family a few years later.



*Chief Oquendo-1985*

Michael arrived to East Waterford in the summer of 1976. One of his first memories was participating in the neighboring town of Norway's Bicentennial Parade as one of the Flag Marshall for Birch Rock Camp. As the youngest camper, Michael was front and center on top of the huge camp float. During his many years as a camper and counselor, Michael has slept in virtually every cabin at camp. And now his older son, David is keeping up the family tradition having just spent his second summer at Birch Rock. And youngest son Robby is only a year or two from his first summer at camp. Michael's daughter Gabrielle is also a camper, spending her summers at camp in Minnesota, where her mom was a camper.

*Continued on page 2*



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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Michael's wife Jojo quips: "Michael's passion for BRC was evident from the first few months of meeting him. I soon realized that an 8 hour drive to Maine from New York City had a giant reward. Michael's summer didn't begin until he splashed like a rocket ship into McWain Pond, sported his Birch Rock camp T-shirt and belted out camp songs after a hearty meal. I quickly realized that Birch Rock was Michael's home away from home."

"It's almost impossible to put into words Michael's passion and infectious enthusiasm for Birch Rock and all that he had done for the BRC Community over the years," says Seth Brewster '70-80s. "As a Birch Rock father, trustee, former camper and staff member, Michael's care for and commitment to Birch Rock defies description. I will say that every time Michael arrives at Camp and walks down the hill to the Lodge, it's like having your brother return home and you know that everything will be a little better."

"Now that we have children of our own," Jojo says, "Michael's goal is to share the Birch Rock experience with other kids. For

the past 8 years Michael has been a part of a team that helps fundraise and jumpstart a school in Hunts Point, NY called St. Ignatious. He is a valued member of their community and he had merged the 2 communities together. Last summer, 3 St. Ignatious kids came to Birch Rock... McWain Pond, Capture-the flag, Cabin 6 and swimming the Whale were his fondest Birch Rock memories. Now he is helping kids form their own life time memories. Next time you see Michael at Birch Rock watch him do his cannon ball splash with a half twist. It's quite a sight!"



*Michael Herzig Family 2009*

## PROTECTING McWAIN POND NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE



*The Call of the Loons*

Waterford – For the past two years, Birch Rock Camp has been working with our fellow neighbors on improving the Watershed of McWain Pond. After reviewing our steep land site with the Lakes Environmental Association and the Town of Waterford, Birch Rock made the commitment to implement erosion controls throughout the campus.

The purpose behind the McWain Pond Watershed Improvement Project is to curb erosion that runs into the Pond. Studies show eroding soil that washes from surrounding land is the chief threat to water quality. When soil particles wash into a lake or pond, the natural balance and phosphorus serves as "junk food" for algae. Algae can ruin a water body and cause a severe ripple effect. Moreover, it can potentially be slimy and ruin all kinds of aquatic activities and land values.



*McWain Pond*

As stewards and protectors of our community, Birch Rock committed resources with the outstanding efforts of Charlie MacDonald and was granted support from the McWain Pond Association. Tony Butterall, President of McWain Pond offered this note of praise: "I wish to commend Birch Rock and your staff for the outstanding work you have done to protect McWain Pond. As you well know Birch Rock Camp presents some unique problems due to its steep grade.....and you have worked hard to overcome these problems."

As we have finished implementing new major erosion controls, Birch Rock will continue to reevaluate and partner in maintaining a healthy water quality to protect our beloved McWain Pond for now and many more generations.

# Reflections from the Rock

By Rich Deering, Alumni Director

Thank you! These are two simple words that we often take for granted. If we think about how often we reach out to help our neighbor, our spouse, our children and our family, but how many times do you actually receive and hear those two appreciative words? This summer our staff wanted to underscore the importance of "Thank You."



During the last letter-writing Sunday, I asked the boys to share their "thank you's" with a very simple hand-written BRC notecard to their respective families/sponsors. It was interesting to see their eyes "pop" with anxiety over the assignment. I asked: Can we all share with our families why we are grateful for the gift of being at BRC? Can we express ourselves in a clear and simple few sentences? There was a deafening silence in the room, but after a few questions and deep breathes, the boys began to scribble a few lines of gratitude in order to perhaps appease me but also move forward to receive a hot Sunday shower. After collecting the notes, I asked the boys how did it feel to write the thank you note. The universal response: "It was easy." We'll then, my response and challenge was how do we keep the positive praises moving forward?

In the age of fast-paced technology, high-speed internet, Twitter, Facebook and all the medium outlets of communication, it was a comforting few moments to have each one of our campers hand-write a heart-felt: Thank you!

Perhaps one of our youngest campers summed it up best:

*Dear Rich & Mike,*

*Thank you for the awesome year at camp. I know I am coming next year. I have great memories of BRC – such as the Hilton A & B skit. I thought that it was really funny because we were philosophers.*

*Birch Rock is like a second home to me. When I go there it seems like I have a huge family. A really caring, fun family.*

*From Your Camper.*  
G

Thank You, Camper G, the entire 2009 camp community, our alumni, friends, neighbors and vendors for making a healthy, happy and fun 2009 season! See you all in 2010!

## THE BEST WEATHER OF THE SUMMER WAS ENJOYED AT FAMILY CAMP 2009

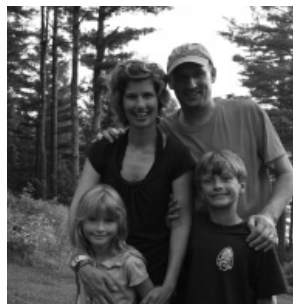


*Three Brewster Generations*

*Mark Your  
Calendar*

*Family 2010*

*August  
13-17, 2010*



*The Whittiers*



*The Girls*



*Family Camp 2009*

### WISH LIST

BRC appreciates your contribution to the camp community. Some items we wish for are:

Used Automatic Pick Up Truck • Framed Backpacks  
New Sunfish Sailboat - \$2500 • 2 Adult Kayaks - \$600 each  
Art Supplies & Equipment • New Campers' Swim Tent  
Outdoor Commercial Grill - \$3000 • Power Tools for Shop Program

Birch Rock is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation.  
All donations received are tax-deductible.

Please contact us [birchrock@aol.com](mailto:birchrock@aol.com) if you might be able to accommodate any of those wishes.

Thank you!

## Birch Rock's Newest Whales

The 2009 season added three more amazing swimmers who persevered around the McWain Pond perimeter. Congratulations to CIT *Bruce Manning*, *Connor McLaughlin* and *Gabe Dreyer*. Great work, Gentlemen!

## Recognition of Trustee Service

Chairman *Seth Brewster* recognized with the camp's deepest appreciation *Steve '70s* and *Barbara Cogswell* of Barrington, IL. These Trustees completed their respective term of service to BRC.

## American Camping Association – NE Public Service Director Visits

*Lucy Norville* of ACA/NE selected BRC as one of six camps to visit during her Maine tour. Lucy writes: "What a wonderful setting, atmosphere and welcoming spirit with the boys and staff. Birch Rock is a special place! Thank you for your hospitality!"

## Birch Rock's Fifth ACA Accreditation Visit Complete

Thanks to the efforts of the entire BRC community, the camp's fifth American Camping Assn. visit was successfully conducted on July 10. Led by *Sarah Seward* of Camp Nashoba North in Raymond, ME and *Neil Krauss* from Camp Takajo in Naples, ME, BRC met all standards in Human Resources, Transportation, Site, Sanitation & Management, Programming, Health & Safety, Water Aquatics, Trip & Travel, and Operational Procedures. Neil commented: "I loved seeing the facility and it is clear that the campers are truly enjoying themselves and your unique BRC experience." Birch Rock has been a proud member and accredited camp for over 15 years.

## Four New Trustees for Birch Rock Camp

*Gerry* and *Bob Tuffy* of Hanover, MA grandparents of *Jonathan Tuffy* and *Julie & Mark McLaughlin* of Skillman, NJ parents of *Alex*, *Patrick* and *Trevor* were elected to Birch Rock's Board of Trustees at the annual meeting held at camp on August 1. Each member will serve a three year term. Welcome and thank you!

## Rich Deering honored by Maine Youth Camping Foundation

After completing his term as President for two years, *Rich* was honored by his fellow camp professionals for "his excellence in leadership and organization" at their annual meeting in Monmouth, ME on July 10 at the YMCA Camp. *Garth Altenberg* of Camp Chewonki succeeded Rich. Rich will now serve as Past President and play an integral role in public service advocacy for Maine Camps.

## Nick Cogswell is this BRC's Triathlon Winner

BRC's fourth annual triathlon proved to be an outstanding event for all involved – especially with a new course design: completing a Duck (across the lake), biking the circumference of McWain and running back to BRC up McWain Hill from Springer's General Store. Congratulations to *Ben Duwall*, *Nate Howard*, *Pat McLaughlin*, *Connor Sullivan*, *Hank Robbins*, *Ryan Boothby*, *Jon Modig*, *Zach Cohen*, *Patrick O'Hara*, *Connor McLaughlin*, *Henry Cleaves*, *Will Alexander*, *Curtis Alexander* and of course, Champion *Nick Cogswell*!

## Eight Complete Counselor-In-Training Season

Under the leadership of *Mike "Mystro" Davis*, eight Birch Rock gentlemen completed leadership training and apprenticeships this past summer: *Jack Cohen* of Darien, CT; *Jamie Foley* of Bowdoinham, ME; *Will Brewster* of Concord, NH; *Jake Cahill* of Hopkinton, MA; *Ben Howard* of Scarborough, ME; *Harry Netzer* of Larchmont, NY; *Bruce Manning* of Steelville, PA; *Chris Rios* of Kinsington, FL. These gentlemen also earned their American Red Cross Lifeguarding First-aid, and CPR Certifications.



2009 Birch rock C.I.T.s

# JUNIOR MAINE GUIDE IS BACK AT BRC

*By Ryno Massey, Wilderness Adventure Director*

The average teenager of contemporary times does not like to be judged or tested, and feels more comfortable using a GPS than a compass. The teenager that becomes a Junior Maine Guide Candidate is not an “average” teen though. These teens can easily shift from a conversation about how milfoil is damaging the ecosystems of our lakes to how to bake cakes over an open fire. They can boil water in 20 minutes with one piece of wet wood, an axe, and a handful of matches. They can paddle a canoe with the same ease that they can navigate Facebook. They can not only do all the paperwork and planning for a trip, but they can also lead it and administer first-aid to the clients. It’s hard not to put them on a pedestal because they really do not seem “average” by any means.



*Ryno, Ben & Gabe*

When I first heard about the Junior Maine Guide (aka JMG) I thought it sounded like a wonderful experience, but I doubted that a teen on summer vacation would want to spend 5 weeks of their precious summer vacation studying only to be tested all day long for a week by a bunch of strange “old timers.”. Boy was I wrong. On the second day of camp I made an announcement about the JMG and told the campers to meet at my table after the meal if they were interested. Two of our long time veteran and senior campers, Ben Semmes and Gabe Dreyer, came right up to me and told me they were interested. Over the years I had seen these two young gentlemen achieve many goals they had set and knew they were perfect for it. Both of them had done the 3 straight weeks of camping in our Maine Wilderness Adventure program the summer before so they already had a slight advantage. Day after day, week after week, they studied and practiced skills. Their level of commitment showed their maturity and drive, I was very impressed right from the start. But it wasn’t me they needed to impress; it was the Testers they would have to demonstrate their knowledge and skills to. So after 5 weeks of JMG” classes,” that often ran

overtime into rest periods and evening activities, the three of us loaded up a mini van with a weeks worth of gear and headed up to the testing site near Rangley, Maine. The hard part was over for me and now the spotlight was on them.

The testing camp itself is truly a unique experience in Maine camping. I had never seen so many camps together in a non-competitive setting. I thought our camp founders, Chief and Onie Brewster would have loved it because one of the founding principles of BRC is non-competitiveness. It wasn’t about betting the other camps, it was about testing one’s self. So for a week while I chatted it up with other counselors and dined with other camps (that was actually my job for the week, to be a taste tester!) Ben and Gabe were put in the hot seat from sun up to sun down. I kept checking in on them throughout the day but I was not allowed to help in any way. As their anxiety cooled down and their confidence built they knocked off one test at a time until they had completed them all. At the end of the week we made our good-byes and headed back to BRC without knowing the results. It takes about a week for the tests to be all graded, notes compiled, and final score calculated. This is both frustrating and nice for the campers. They don’t have to come back to camp with everyone asking them if they passed or not, they can just savor the accomplishment of the hard work they put in and the new friends they made at testing camp. Finally the results came, hand delivered by the director of the JMG, “Moose” Curtis. I held onto the results for a couple days and finally in front of the whole camp opened the envelopes and read out loud the results. They both passed! What an amazing accomplishment. Ben Semmes and Gabe Dreyer are both now recognized by the Maine of Maine as a certified Junior Maine Guide. And by the way, all the adult Maine Guides at the testing camp said it’s harder to become a JMG than just a normal Maine Guide. Proud and impressed are insufficient words to express my feelings about what Ben and Gabe did this summer. Ben and Gabe without a doubt definitely deserve a standing, rousing Birch Rock Cheer!



*BRC’s Junior Maine Guides*

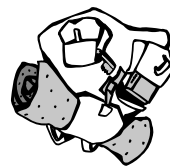
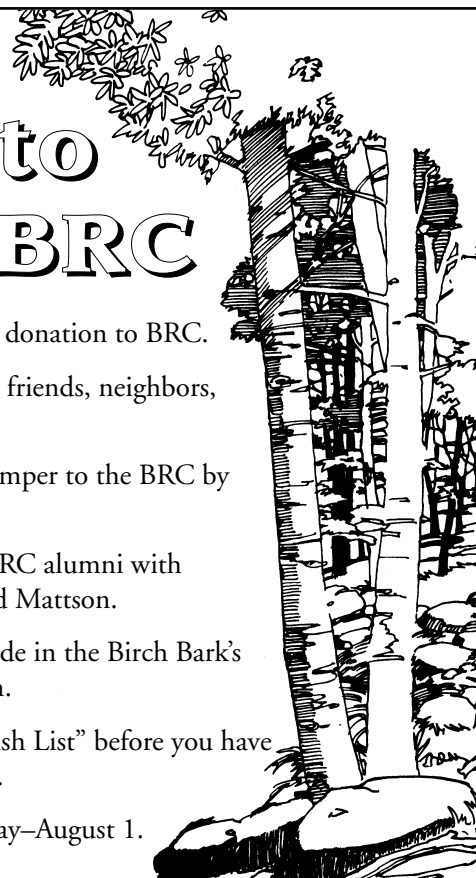
# Mark Your Calendars for 2010!



BRC Summer Office Opens	Tuesday, May 31, 2010
Spring Clean-up Day	Saturday, June 5, 2010
BRC Staff Orientation	Monday, June 14, 2010
C.I.T. Orientation	Saturday, June 19, 2010
BRC Opening 1st Session	Wednesday, June 23, 2010
BRC 1st Visitation Day	Sunday, July 11, 2010
BRC 1st Session Ends	Saturday, July 17, 2010
BRC Opening 2nd Session	Sunday, July 18, 2010
Cubs' Camp	Sunday, July 18, 2010
Maine Wilderness Adventure	Sunday, July 18, 2010
Cubs' Camp ends	Saturday, July 31, 2010
Alumni Day	Saturday, July 31, 2010
BRC 2nd Visitation Day	Sunday, August 1, 2010
BRC for Boys & MWA ends	Tuesday, August 10, 2010
BRC Family Camp	Friday, August 13, 2010
BRC Family Camp ends	Tuesday, August 17, 2010

## It's Easy to Help BRC

- Send a tax-deductible donation to BRC.
- Promote BRC among friends, neighbors, family and colleagues.
- Refer a prospective camper to the BRC by phone or email.
- Host a gathering of BRC alumni with Directors Deering and Mattson.
- Send us news to include in the Birch Bark's Alumni News column.
- Ask us about our "Wish List" before you have your spring yard sales.
- Join us for Alumni Day--August 1.



**BIRCH ROCK CAMP  
IS NOW ACCEPTING  
APPLICATIONS  
FOR THE 2010 SEASON.**

For more information,  
please visit our website  
at:  
[www.birchrock.org](http://www.birchrock.org)

**BIRCH ROCK CAMP**

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